
PLAN ALTERNATIVES

Summary

Although many Plan alternatives could be formulated and evaluated, the following alternatives offer a comprehensive variety and illustrate various feasible approaches to community planning options within the Greater North Park community in terms of land use classification and development intensity.

RESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

Existing Plan Alternative

This alternative would continue the pattern of the existing 1970 land use plan. The plan recommended higher-density residential zoning (R-1000, R-600, R-400), in particular, in the northern half of the community between the University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard corridors. The northern portion of the community, north of Adams Avenue, was recommended for single-family and R-3000 zoning, with some exceptions where higher-density zones were recommended. The 1975 rezoning program did not bring zoning into total conformance with the land use plan. Therefore, in order for this alternative to be effective, an additional rezoning program would have to be undertaken, bringing existing zoning into compliance with the 1970 plan.

Existing Zoning Alternative

This alternative would require the adjustment of the existing land use plan to bring it into conformance with existing zoning. This approach would permit the most intense development of all the alternatives, which may put an unreasonable burden upon existing and projected public facilities.

Average Block Density Alternative

This alternative would amend existing zoning to reflect the average density which presently exists on each residential block. This would mean that those blocks which are zoned for higher densities, such as R-600 or R-400, would be substantially reduced in development potential since the typical 6,250 or 7,000-square-foot lot is seldom, if ever, developed in excess of the R-800 density.

Conversely, if this approach were to be utilized consistently throughout the community, it would mean that some blocks which are presently predominantly single-family and designated as such on the land use plan, would, if multifamily development exists within the individual blocks, be possibly upgraded to permit higher densities based upon the averaging approach.

No-Growth Alternative

This alternative would establish maximum permitted densities predicated upon the lowest density developed lot on any given block. Vacant lots would be permitted to develop to the maximum permitted density, but developed lots would not be permitted to redevelop in excess of the maximum permitted density. In effect, this alternative would be a no-growth alternative.

High-Intensity and Transit Corridor Alternative

This alternative identifies University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard as major high-intensity public transit corridors and establishes gradients in zoning density based upon pedestrian accessibility to those streets. Conversely, permitted density would decrease as distances increase from the base streets. As a cautionary note, it should be understood that permitted densities would not be predicated exclusively on distances from the base streets. Other factors, such as the capability of the street system to accommodate traffic generated by development, neighborhood development patterns, neighborhood preservation programs, development bonus systems and public transit capacities will also be considered in determining the ultimate permitted zoning densities in these corridors.

In classic land use theory, density is stepped down one gradient for each tier of blocks removed from the high-intensity corridor. This, over time, would create noticeable changes in development intensity as one traversed the grid system. However, the existing character of the community must be taken into consideration since it is not always possible to apply classic land use theory in its pure form. This approach would require both down-zonings and up-zonings in order to be implemented. This approach offers the realization of two goals: 1) preservation of single-family and low-density areas in the northern section of the community and throughout the southern half of the community; and 2) establishment of a vibrant, redeveloped, higher-intensity central east-west corridor through the community.

Density Bonus Alternatives (Incentive Zoning)

For most of the residential alternatives examined, the concept of density bonuses could be awarded in return for implementing overall Plan goals. Such incentives could be awarded in return for extraordinary performance with respect to environmental enhancement, urban design, parking, landscaping or energy conservation.

In order for a density bonus system to be successful and not impact the community's public services and facilities, sufficient controls must be utilized and the bonus system should be applied only in those portions of the community where the development could be accommodated.

Such a system should be implemented through tailored zoning regulations (Planned District) or the use of Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) and Planned Commercial Developments (PCDs).

COMMERCIAL ALTERNATIVES

Existing Plan Alternative

The adopted community plan recommends more limited commercial areas than are now developed or zoned. It essentially provides for strip commercial along El Cajon Boulevard and a portion of 30th Street with the major community commercial core focused around University Avenue and 30th Street. In addition, there are a number of neighborhood commercial nodes, including the eastern portion of Adams Avenue, dispersed throughout the community. The recommendations of the adopted community plan, insofar as reduction of strip commercial zoning are concerned, have never been implemented.

Existing Zoning Alternative

This alternative would, in effect, maintain a situation that has been existing since prior to the adoption of the 1970 community plan. This situation consists of strip commercial zoning along the major streets, such as El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue, 30th Street, Park Boulevard and Adams Avenue. The existing zoning designates an excessive amount of land for commercial use and does not adequately differentiate between the many kinds of commercial activity. Some of the commercially zoned land is not now and is not likely to be utilized for commercial activities.

Intensified Commercial Area Alternative

This alternative would provide for the consolidation and intensification of commercial activities which would be more specifically defined as to their nature and location in the community. Heightened levels of commercial activity would be promoted at University Avenue and 30th Street which is the commercial core or “downtown” of Greater North Park. El Cajon Boulevard would continue to be emphasized as a classic commercial strip with additional emphasis being given to auto-oriented uses. Excessive and unproductive strip commercial areas would be contracted and redefined as either neighborhood or specialty commercial nodes. Portions of the former strip commercial areas would become multiuse areas featuring higher-density residential development and specialty commercial uses serving that residential development as well as other residential areas within walking distance.

In addition, this alternative would also allow office development which would be complementary to the retail development and would provide support to the retail core and to El Cajon Boulevard.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVES

Residential Alternative

The recommended residential alternative is a combination of the “High-Intensity and Transit Corridor Alternative” and the “Density Bonus Alternative.” This combined alternative would redefine residential development patterns in Greater North Park, provide a strong opportunity for the preservation and rehabilitation of single-family and low-density neighborhoods, and

emphasize higher-density development along existing high-intensity transit corridors. This alternative would provide needed support to the public transit system and the community's primary commercial areas, and reward well-designed and located residential developments with density bonuses.

Commercial Alternative

The recommended commercial alternative is the "Intensified Commercial Area Alternative." The alternative would emphasize the more compact commercial area approach (with the exception of El Cajon Boulevard) which in turn would be more conducive to pedestrian movement and public transit support. The compaction of the commercial areas would provide the opportunity for higher density residential and multiuse development along the underutilized strip commercial corridors.